



Wisconsin Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

Customer Focus

Margaret Lalor grew up on the Wisconsin farm that her grandfather settled in 1846. An immigrant from Ireland, he staked a claim just west of the Town of Dunn in Dane County.

"He walked through where I am now, and he saw a spring. Of course, water was a high item, and when he got to Milwaukee and he looked at the land maps he said, I want that parcel."

Over 150 years later, in April of 1999, the Town of Dunn purchased an agricultural conservation easement on the Lalor farm using Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) matching funds from USDA.

Thanks to this cost-share assistance, 150 acres of prime farmland, woods, and wetlands only minutes from the State Capitol will remain a farm forever. FRPP funds have helped the Town of Dunn purchase development rights on nine more family farms totaling 1,139 acres.

The Town continues to accept applications from landowners eager to protect their farms and the future of agriculture in the Town of Dunn. The purchase of development rights (PDR) program is part of the Town's Rural Preservation Program. It is a voluntary farmland protection effort that compensates landowners for limiting future development on their land. FRPP funds stretch local dollars and offer a tool to help the community determine its future and provide open space and agricultural viability for future generations.

"It gives me a good feeling to know that the land that has been in our family for well over 100 years will be protected from development," said Lalor.

Overview:

The USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) helps farmers and ranchers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program partners with States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations to purchase conservation easements for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. NRCS provides up to 50% of the fair market value of the easement to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership.

Conservation plans are developed on all highly erodible cropland. Nationally, over \$101.3 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996. The 2002 Farm Bill produced some changes in the program, including the addition of a provision providing for the protection of historical and archaeological resources on farm and ranchlands, and the inclusion of nongovernmental organizations as eligible entities. The Farm Bill also significantly increased the amount of financial assistance available under FRPP, authorizing nearly \$600 million through Fiscal Year 2007. Sixty-seven million dollars was allocated to states to purchase easements in FY 2003.

Accomplishments:

Cooperating entities' proposals are selected through a competitive process designed to protect parcels that will help accomplish FRPP and local land use goals. FRPP easements protect entire working farms, woodlands, wetlands, important natural areas, and historical and cultural resources. Through FY 2002, \$2.88 million in FRPP funds have been awarded to purchase easements on approximately 3,352 acres of valuable agricultural land in Wisconsin.

Due to increasing development pressure throughout the state, requests for FRPP funds have increased dramatically in recent years, far outpacing the program's funding capacity. In FY 2003, partners in Wisconsin requested \$6,179,643 in FRPP funds. This request represents 9.5 percent of the total amount of FRPP funds available in FY 2003. Wisconsin was allocated \$1,351,000 to purchase conservation easements in FY 2003.

State Contact:

Carl Wacker, Wisconsin FRPP Manager
Phone: (608) 276-8732
carl.wacker@wi.usda.gov

Outlook:

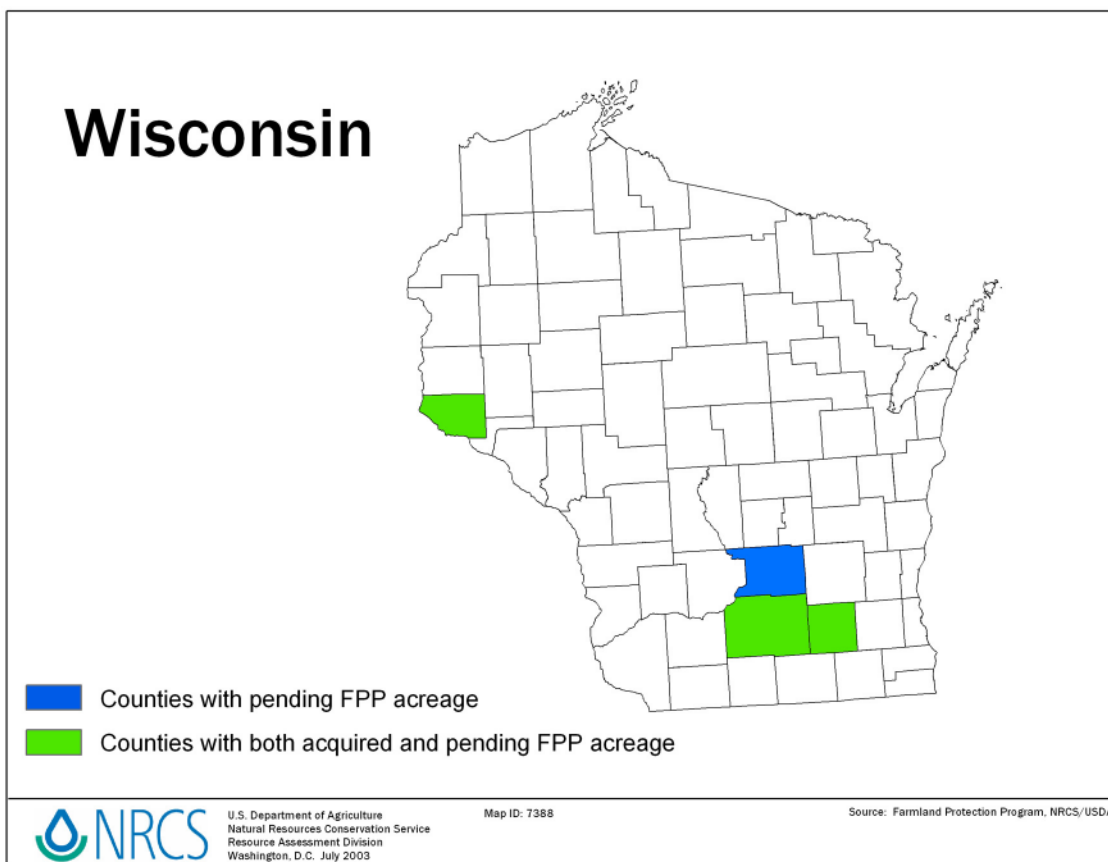
In recent years, Wisconsin has lost more than 1.5 square miles of rural land to development every week and is losing the equivalent of 250 average-sized farms every year. Most of this loss is occurring in areas identified by the American Farmland Trust (AFT) as containing high quality soils under high development pressure. The AFT recognizes southern Wisconsin as the third most threatened region in the U.S. for the loss of prime farmland. Interest in effective land-use planning has risen. The use of conservation easements on agricultural lands is increasingly viewed as an effective tool to balance the demand for new development with the desire to preserve our best farmland, while meeting the needs of farmers.

**Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program - Wisconsin Easements
as of June 2003
Number, Acres, Easement Costs by County**

Wisconsin					
	Easement Cost			Federal Payment	
County	Acres	Total (\$)	Avg. (\$/acre)	\$	%
Dane	1,586	2,715,539	1,712	1,125,750	41%
Jefferson	57	63,000	1,105	31,500	50%
Pierce	280	958,000	3,421	282,200	29%
Total*	1,923	3,736,539	1,943	1,439,450	39%
*Totals do not include FY 2002 pending easements					

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program - Wisconsin Easements as of June 2003
Counties with Acquired and Pending FRPP Easements



Trends in Population by County - Wisconsin 1990 to 2000 (Census Data)

